

The Correlation between Students' Academic Achievement and Ethical and Moral Activities Involvement in a Christian Institution

Nakhon Kitjaroonchai, Lecturer

Asia-Pacific International University,
Thailand nakhon@apiu.edu

Abstract

This study investigates the correlation between students' academic achievement and their involvement in ethical and moral activities. The sample of the study was 472 students from Asia-Pacific International University, Thailand, who were enrolled in different programs in the second semester of the academic year 2013-2014. Data were obtained from the internal software created by the IT department at Asia-Pacific International University called SARRA (System for Administration, Reports, Requests and Academics). Data were analyzed using One-way ANOVA to examine significant difference between students' academic achievement and their participation in ethical and moral activities. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson's r) was used to analyze the correlation between students' academic achievement and their ethical and moral activities involvement. The study revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between students academic achievement and their involvement in ethical and moral activities at $\alpha = 0.05$. The findings of the study also revealed that there was also a statistically positive correlation between students' academic achievement and their involvement in ethical and moral activities (r -value = 0.447, p -value = 0.000 at $\alpha = 0.01$).

Keywords: academic achievement, ethical and moral activities, college students

I. Introduction

Extracurricular activities and activities promoting ethical and moral values have long been integrated into the school syllabus as a propeller to navigate students to a greater path of life as well as develop their graceful characters needed in this competitive world. Off-site school activities have been recognized for promoting ways to enhance students' school experience and increase social skills, self-discipline, public interest, and leadership skills (Adeyemo, 2010). Worldwide educational systems perceive moral values as a significant component to govern behaviors and cultivate a person to be upright and virtuous. These ethical and moral values are consolidated either directly or indirectly in school curriculum. In Thailand, for example, the Implementation Handbook of the National Qualification Framework for

Higher Education designates five domains of learning in which a college student must acquire from each course prior to completing school for employment opportunity. The five domains are ethical and moral integrity, knowledge, cognitive skills, interpersonal skills and responsibility, and numerical analysis, communication and IT skills. Ethical and moral development was prioritized among other learning domains (Handbook of National Qualification Framework for Higher Education in Thailand, 2006). Apart from this, the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment launched its manual of external quality assessment criteria for the fourth round (2014-2020) in June 2014, to assess quality of education for all higher institutions nationwide. The first indicator in the ONESQA manual (ONESQA, 2014:1) on quality of graduate states:

“students should live worthwhile and

valuable daily lives; they are on good terms with others, willing to serve, and develop various moral virtues such as discipline, gratitude, kindness, patience, honesty, frugality, diligence, unselfishness. They also obtain work experience, join in extracurricular activities, and engage in beneficial service”

The criteria require all learners in all programs of study to be engaged in beneficial service (extracurricular) while pursuing professional skills and knowledge acquisition at school. This proves that current society craves for students and graduates who are not only keen in academic excellence but they must also obtain virtuous character, discipline, servicemindedness, and integrity. A research conducted locally revealed the top five desirable characteristics of graduates needed by employers in Thailand are such as possessing academic knowledge and professional ethics, possessing morality, honesty and self-sacrificing, possessing responsibility and thorough carefulness, possessing the ability to contact and cooperate well with others (Puntachai & Khamawattana, 2012).

At Asia-Pacific International University, holistic education is provided in which the principles of education are grounded by Biblical values and students are prepared for lives of joyful and selfless service to others (Academic Bulletin, 2014). The institution is guided by principles and philosophy of education stated over a century ago by a church pioneer, Ellen G. White, in her book entitled ‘Education’

published in 1903. She stated, *“True education means more than the perusal of a certain course of study. It has to do with the whole being and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers.”*(White, 1903, p. 13). This statement can be explained that education must not put an emphasis in the learner of one particular dimension, but it must deal with the whole being, namely, physical development (curriculum or programs that enhance

physical health which includes practical work-study programs, community service projects, or service learning), mental empowerment (all subjects or courses offered in school settings that promote function of mental discipline and empowerment), and spiritual emphasis (extra-curricular activities such as personal devotions, worships, prayers, vespers, chapels, or other religious-related activities that enhance an individual’s faith in the Christian God). The university teaches moral lessons and integrates spiritual values in programs of studies and one of the identities of the institution spells *“promoting students’ spiritual lives and commitment to serve others.”* In corresponding to its mission, the institution requires all students to attend the Chapel Program on every Wednesday morning and this ethical and moral activity is known as Character Development Program which is encoded as GENL110 and it is obligatory for all students at Asia-Pacific International University. Failure to attend this character development program on a weekly basis or receiving a ‘U’ grade affects graduation with honors and the unsatisfactory grade will be engraved in the students’ transcript. The university enforces this policy to implement its identity to uphold ethical and moral values in building desirable characters in its students. Boarding students at Asia-Pacific International University are strongly encouraged to attend dormitory worships to learn and digest moral lessons from the Christian Bible perspectives to live a worthy and meaningful life. It is not only this character development program and worships that students are solicited to attend, but also a variety of “hidden curricular” activities as well as other religious-related programs and community service programs in which students are urged to be engaged in. The institution believes that all these ethical and moral exercises will prepare students to be wellrounded citizens with public-mindedness in serving others selflessly in

the community they live in.

The Office of Higher Education Commission in Thailand has given a strong emphasis on ethical and moral values to be integrated in all courses in addition to theoretical knowledge and skills imparted to learners. To address these concerns as well as to enrich other researchers' findings on positive impact of students' involvement in extracurricular activities, the researcher in his curiosity intends to examine if all these extra-curricular programs (ethical and moral activities, community service activities, and other religious-related activities) provided by Asia-Pacific International University have any impact on students' academic achievement. The findings could serve as a reference for the responsible departments which are committed to enriching students with character development as well as developing their moral integrity.

II. Objectives of this study

This study aims to examine the correlation between students' academic achievement and their involvement in ethical and moral activities as well as to examine if there is any significant difference between students with higher academic achievement and the ones with lower academic achievement in regard to their involvement in ethical and moral activities.

Definition of Term

Ethical and moral activities - religious-related activities provided for students at Asia-Pacific International University in order to boost character development, such as dormitory worships, Sabbath worships, vespers, chapels, family group worship, assembly, community service on Saturday afternoon, and small group worship. These activities carry no academic credit but worship credits are given to individual students.

III. Review of Literature

Morality is defined as "principles concerning right and wrong or good and bad behavior." (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary,

1995), whereas the Online Business Dictionary (2015) states that morality is a "conformance to a recognized code, doctrine, or system or rules of what is right or wrong and to behave accordingly." Gert (2012) avers that morality is associated with both a descriptive and a normative sense. In the descriptive sense, morality refers to a code of proper conduct corroborated by individuals or groups. In contrast, the normative sense defines 'morality' as a code of conduct, given specified conditions and endorsed by particular groups (Luco, 2014). Pornrungrroj (2014) stated that morality is a beneficial act which each organization, society, or community prizes its value. Morality is essential and necessary, and it is a desired characteristic which differ individuals to be distinctive. According to the Pornrungrroj (2014), the moral values which enrich a person to be virtuous and noble are such as self-discipline, conscience, gratitude, kindness, patience, honesty, austerity, perseverance, and selflessness. Morality refines one's character and behavior to be well thought of and admired. A person with moral values is able to endure hardship, persist with criticism, and optimistically confront challenges in a tranquil manner. Guseinov asserted that the golden rule of morality is "a rule of mutuality" which means "relationship between people are moral when they are interchangeable as subjects of individually responsible conduct and when they have the ability to put themselves in other's places." (Guseinov, 2014: 91). In religious perspectives, for example Christianity, morality is based on God's character and laws outlined in the biblical doctrines, and morality is modeled by Christ. In the Christian perspective, morality should not differ from one person to another for the Bible is the source of morality and so is God. The golden rule in the scripture sums up the core doctrine of Christianity that human beings must love their God and their neighbors. Any individual who complies with this golden rule and perceives that God is the source of morality, that person is anticipated to act and live moral life. In Buddhism, morality has to do with the Five Precepts, namely 1) *ahimsa*, no killing; 2) no stealing; 3) no lying; 4) no adultery; and 5) no

imbibing in intoxicating drinks (Sellmann, 2009). Buddhists believe that moral development can be secured when a person can control over his own actions or refrain from exercising thoughts or actions that yield negative effect on fellowman and making moral decisions can lead to positive feelings and emotional enhancement (Malti, Keller & Buchmann, 2012).

A number of research articles showed that learners who uplift ethical and moral values and actively participate in ethical and moral activities can improve their inner potential as well as their academic performance. In other words, students' academic achievement has a relationship with their involvement in activities that promote ethical and moral values (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002; Broh, 2002; Huang & Change, 2004; Jeynes, 2007; Wang & Shiveley, 2008; Strapp & Farr, 2010; Mooney, 2010; Erickson & Phillips, 2012). Research by Adeyemo (2010) found that students' involvement in extracurricular activities helped boost their achievement in learning physics, and social activities that they were engaged in positively influenced their academic achievement, while Metsapelto & Pulkkinen's study (2012) revealed that students' participation in academic clubs was associated with their higher academic achievement and lower internalizing problems compared to those non-participating students. Extracurricular activities provide students with a sense of personal belonging to their committed group and they often receive moral support from companions to achieve the objectives or common goal of their plan. Chip, Cynthia & Jane (2003) studied the improvement of student achievement through character education with middle school students in Chicago, Illinois, and they found in their post-intervention data that the improvement of moral character such as integrity, honesty, trustworthiness, and respect increased student academic achievement. Character education facilitates students on decision making in which Stiff-William (2010) calls this 'decision filter' that engages both cognitive and affective processes and it supports individuals when they encounter barriers or problems in life. This 'decision filter' will

enhance learners' ability to make perceptive and sound decisions in life. Mooney (2010) and Erickson & Phillips (2012) revealed that extra curriculum activity such as religious activities which promote morality and virtue had a positive impact on student success. Mooney found that students who attended religious services once a week or more during their last year of high school had higher grades at college than non-regular religious attendees. In her study, she averred that religious students reported studying more, partying less, and dedicating more time to extracurricular activities which they find beneficial to their academic life, while Erickson & Phillips (2012) revealed in their study of a positive relationship between religious participation and educational outcomes. Mooney's (2010) and Erickson & Phillips' (2012) studies are congruent with that of Jeynes (2007) whose study showed that students attending religious schools had higher levels of academic achievement than those who are in public school. Jeynes affirmed that religious schools outperformed nonreligious schools due to differences in school culture such as school atmosphere, racial harmony, level of school discipline, school violence, and amount of homework done. As Jackson & Coursey (1986, cited in Jeynes, 2007, p. 15) claimed that "religious people are more likely to have internal of control and perform well" Students attending a religious institution with strict regulations and disciplinary procedures and supervised by caring teachers tend to reduce the academic gap and succeed in school. Jeynes (2007) argued that religious commitment could have a positive impact on academic outcomes. According to Sumari, et al. (2010) religiosity is one of the significant factors that contributes to academic achievement.

With these assertions argued by various researchers in their previous studies, the present study intends to fill in this identified research gap as well as enriching other previous studies by examining a correlation between students' academic achievement and their involvement in ethical and moral activities regulated by AsiaPacific International University as well as

investigating if there is significant difference between students with high academic achievement and the ones with lower achievement with respect to their participation in ethical and moral activities. The researcher anticipates that the current study would contribute to the understanding of the relation between moral enrichment and academic achievement. It could also serve as a reference for individuals who have invested in a large amount of time in promoting extracurricular activities that are associated with ethical and moral values in order to enhance and nurture character development in students' lives while pursuing a Christian education.

IV. Research Methodology

Participants

The target population for this study was 472 college students consisting of 204 male and 268 female students enrolled in different majors at Asia-Pacific International University, Thailand, in the second semester of academic year 20132014. Of this population, 223 students were from the Thai program while 249 were from the International program. These students resided in the university dormitories so that they could independently participate in the ongoing extracurricular activities provided by the university. The researcher omitted day students and nursing students in this current study due to the lack of complete information and their off-campus residence which created inconvenience in attending ethical and moral activities.

Instrument

The researcher retrieved data of students' records of extracurricular activities attendances from the developed software used internally by the university called SARRA (System for Administration, Reports, Requests and Academics). This software is built on .NET framework version 3.5 and used ASP.NET and runs on Windows Server 2008. SARRA features different capacities and for student use, the system will allow them to view their grades report, CGPA, financial report, expense report, course evaluation, and other reports such as worship attendance, citizenship point, learning center attendance, and many more). SARRA also provides different features and lessens responsibility for various departments. For example, the registrar from Admission and Records Office can use this software for student data management, course evaluation management, student academic achievement (GPA). Thus, the researcher obtained prompt data of students' ethical and moral activities attendances and investigated their correlation with student academic achievement (GPA) which was provided by the Admission and Records Office.

V. Results and Discussion

The demographic characteristics of the participants are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Frequency of Percentage of subjects divided according to gender, program of study, year of study, and major of study (N= 472).

	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	204	43.2
Female	264	56.8
Program of study		
International	249	52.8
Thai	223	47.2

Year of study		
Freshman	150	31.8
Sophomore	115	24.4
Junior	101	21.4
Senior	106	22.5
Major of study		
English	250	53.0
Business	111	23.5
Science	26	5.5
Theology	23	4.9
Education and Psychology	62	13.1

The majority of the research participants were from the English major which consists of 53% of the total population followed by business (23.5%), while the smallest group was theology students (4.9%).

The aims of this study were to examine the correlation between students' academic achievement and their involvement in ethical and moral activities and to investigate if there is significant difference between students with higher academic

achievement and the ones with lower academic achievement with regard to their involvement in the ethical and moral activities regulated by the university. The researcher assumed that getting involved in ethical and moral activities has a positive impact on students' academic performance. Table 2 below show students' academic achievement and mean scores for involvement in ethical and moral activities.

Table 2: Learning achievement and mean scores and standard deviation of involvement in ethical and moral activities

Learning Achievement	N	Mean	SD
low (0.00-1.99)	34	24.7009	24.36010
average (2.00-2.99)	219	57.9098	37.00061
high (3.00-4.00)	219	80.5990	35.90920
Total	472	66.0451	39.04755

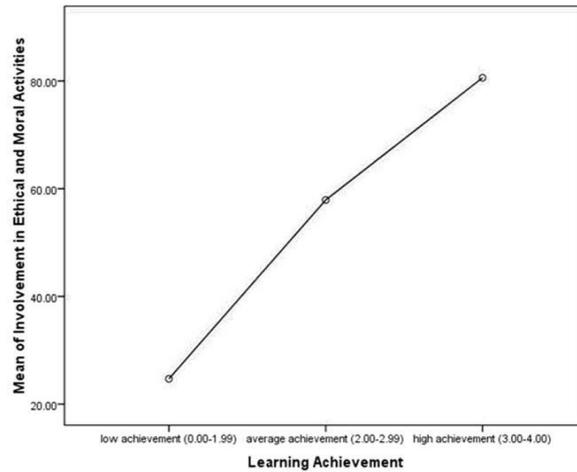


Figure A. Line graph of the mean of ethical and moral activities attendance vs academic achievement (GPA)

To determine whether there are significant differences among heterogeneous learners with regard to their involvement in ethical and moral activities, One-way ANOVA and

Scheffe test were used to analyze data. The result of statistical analysis shows in Tables 3 and 4 below.

Table 3: Analysis of the significant difference between heterogeneous learners in regard to their involvement in ethical and moral activities.

Multiple Comparisons

Involvement in ethical and moral activities

Scheffe

(I) Learning Achievement	(J) Learning Achievement	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
low (0.00-1.99)	average (2.00-2.99)	-33.20893*	6.58834	.000	-49.3872	-17.0307
	high (3.00-4.00)	-55.89816*	6.58834	.000	-72.0764	-39.7199
average (2.00-2.99)	low (0.00-1.99)	33.20893*	6.58834	.000	17.0307	49.3872
	high (3.00-4.00)	-22.68922*	3.41563	.000	-31.0766	-14.3019
high (3.00-4.00)	low (0.00-1.99)	55.89816*	6.58834	.000	39.7199	72.0764
	average (2.00-2.99)	22.68922*	3.41563	.000	14.3019	31.0766

*.The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 4: Analysis of groups classified in different subset (Involvement in ethical and moral activities – Scheffe)

Learning Achievement	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
low (0.00-1.99)	34	24.7009		
average (2.00-2.99)	219		57.9098	
high (3.00-4.00)	219			80.5990
Sig.		1.000	1.000	1.000

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

As can be seen in Table 3, One-way ANOVA statistical analysis shows that there are significant differences among the three different groups by their involvement in ethical and moral activities at $\alpha = .05$. Students with high academic achievement showed statistically significant difference from the other two groups with average achievement ($p=0.000$) and low academic achievement ($p=0.000$) by their participation in ethical and moral activities. Likewise, the group with average academic achievement shows statistically significant difference from their peers with low academic achievement (p

$= 0.000$) by their participation in ethical and moral activities. This can be concluded that students with high academic achievement outperformed their peers with average and low academic achievement significantly, and the students with average academic achievement outshone their peers with low academic achievement in regard to their participation in the university ethical and moral activities. The analysis also shows that the three different groups were classified in different subsets (Subset for alpha = 0.05) as shown in Table 4.

Table 5: Display of the Mean and Standard Deviation of Involvement in Ethical and Moral Activities of Students in the Thai and International Programs

Involvement in Ethical and Moral Activities	Program of Study	N	Mean	SD
		Thai	223	59.8338
	International	249	71.6078	39.85824

Table 6: Analysis of the significant difference between students in the Thai program and students in the International program in regard to their involvement in ethical and moral activities

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	f	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									lower	upper
Involvement in Ethical and Moral Activities	Equal variances assumed	.041	.839	-3.305	470	.001	-11.77394	3.56276	-18.77484	-4.77304
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.317	469.152	.001	-11.77394	3.54943	-18.74868	-4.79920

The statistical analysis shows in Table 5 that overall students enrolled in the International program outperformed their peers in the Thai program in regard to their involvement in ethical and moral activities. The analysis also shows in Table 6 that there is statistically significant difference between students in the different programs of study in regards to their involvement in ethical and moral activities at $\alpha = .05$. The phenomenon can be explained that over a quarter of the students in the International program used for this study are sponsored by their churches and missions and they are somewhat expected to exhibit faithful participation in ethical

and moral activities provided by the university. Other reasons contributing to their surpassing over their peers in the Thai program in regards to participation in the ethical and moral activities need further investigated.

To respond to the research objective in examining the correlation between students' academic achievement and their involvement in ethical and moral activities, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson's r) was used to analyze data and the statistical analysis is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Correlation statistics between student academic achievement and their involvement in ethical and moral activities

Correlations

		Involvement in Ethical and Moral Activities	Academic Achievement
Involvement in Ethical and Moral Activities	Pearson Correlation	1	.447**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	188.065	5194.253
	Covariance	.399	11.028
	N	472	472
Academic Achievement	Pearson Correlation	.477**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	5194.253	718138.859
	Covariance	11.028	1524.711
	N	472	472

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The statistical analysis shows in Table 7 that there is a significantly positive correlation between students' academic achievement and their involvement in ethical and moral activities (r -value = 0.447, $p < 0.01$). This can be concluded that students' involvement in ethical and moral activities has a positive correlation with their academic performance. In other words, extracurricular activities like ethical and moral activities which the university has rather enhance students' academic life than abridging their valuable time of study.

VI. Discussion

Drawn from the results of this study, it is quite apparent that ethical and moral activities organized by Asia-Pacific International University have a positive impact on the students' academic performance. This current study proved that those students with higher academic achievement (GPA) were more involved in extracurricular activities, particularly ethical and moral activities, than those with lower academic achievement (GPA). It is obvious that participation in extracurricular activities did not lower students' academic performance per se, but instead helped them to persist and perform better in their academic life. The finding of the study is congruent with Wang & Shiveley (2008) whose study revealed that extracurricular activities have a very positive impact on the academic performance of students at Sacramento State. They discovered that students achieved higher rates of retention and graduation, better GPAs when the students engaged in activities such as board members of associated students, residence hall associates, orientation leaders, or student club leaders. The findings of this current study also corresponded with Jeynes' (2007), Mooney's (2010), and Erickson & Phillips' (2012) who found that attending religious activities increases students' academic achievement and reduces disciplinary behavioral problems as well as drug problems in school. At Asia-Pacific International University ethical and moral values and religious-related activities are widely emphasized and students are strongly encouraged to maintain a minimum

of 70% of their worship attendance throughout each academic semester since the institution is committed to fulfill its obligation of being an institution upholding ethical and moral value as defined in its annual internal quality assessment handbook. The results of this study confirmed other researchers' works on correlation between students' academic achievement and their participation in extracurricular activities as studied and synthesized in the literature review (Broh, 2002; Huang & Change, 2004; Jeynes, (2007); Wang & Shiveley, 2008; Mooney, 2010; Erickson & Phillips, 2012). This phenomenon can be explained from different angles. From the researcher's perspectives, the current study results can be interpreted as the following. Ethical and moral activities as well as religious-related activity enhance students' academic performance. This is due to the fact that religion plays a vital role in an individual's life and religious belief and practice as claimed by Mooney (2010: 199) "give believers solace in time of trouble, thereby enabling them to deal better than nonbelievers with stressful events that might otherwise negatively impact their academic achievement." According to Jeynes (2003: 119) religious practice produces "internal locus of control" in propelling devotees to confront challenges with positive perception. Religious practice can also establish social control and promote positive educational outcomes (Mooney, 2010), and involvement in religious activities during adolescence has longterm effects on a range of life outcomes which result in mental health as well as educational attainment. Religiosity is one of the significant determinants of high academic success and moral standard (Sumari, Hussin, & SiraJ, 2010). In the Christian and Biblical perspective, the scripture claims, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge" (Proverbs 9:10, New International Version). Nedley argued that in a Christian school setting, nurturing spiritual faith and reading spiritual materials on a daily basis could enhance the brain function and improve students' academic performance (Nedley, 2010). Students' active involvement in ethical and

moral activities at Asia-Pacific International University could be an essential determinant for them to apply for available educational scholarships procured by the university. As a practice here at the university, the ad hoc committee assigned to select qualified candidates for scholarships would often define a criterion that applicants must exhibit role model in earnest involvement in ethical and moral activities regulated by the institution apart from their outstanding academic performance. Along with this, a number of academic excellence awards initiated by various departments are presented annually during the consecration ceremony on graduation day attended by academia, guardians, patrons, distinguished guests, relatives and friends. This honorable ceremony brings dignity and acknowledgement to distinctive students whose academic achievement as well as life aspect is well-worth praising. In achieving an outcome of any incident, learners are often motivated by internal and external drives to stimulate them to reach their intentional goal since both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations have a positive relation with students' learning achievement (Kitjaroonchai & Kitjaroonchai, 2012). In addition to this, a number of subjects used for this study are sponsored students whom their respective mission, church, or patron anticipates will grow in wholesomeness as defined in the Adventist holistic educational philosophy; the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers (White, 1903). The university strongly emphasizes these three aspects of development through ethical and moral activities in order to shape students to become fully prepared to live in a competitive society where ethical and moral values are often neglected.

Involvement in a committed group or club activity strengthens social bonding among the members. The findings of this study corresponded with Wang & Shiveley (2008) whose study revealed that students obtained better GPA and higher good standing when they engaged in activities such as serving as a board member or serving in a leadership position in student clubs. This might be due to the fact that social relations among the members boost them to support each other to

achieve their set goals as well as learning objectives. Their sense of belonging drives them to harmoniously achieve the outcomes. As Hinck & Brandell (cited in Fujita, 2005: 6) claimed that "involvement in community and service learning affects learners' higher level thinking skills, motivation to learn, application of learning, as well as basic academic skills." Students' involvement in a well structured community service or club activity could enhance their potentiality, time management, and leadership skills rather than diminish them; thus contributing to their academic performance.

Limitations of the Study

Some limitations to this study did exist. The sample population was selected from a university which belongs to the Seventh-day Adventist Christian denomination despite the fact that the subjects were from different nationalities and religious denominations represented in the study. The findings may not be conclusive enough to generalize the relation between academic achievement and involvement in ethical and moral activities in other local public universities where Buddhism dominates other faiths.

Recommendations for Further Study

The study provides useful information regarding the issue of whether extracurricular activities such as ethical and moral activities have a positive or negative impact on students' academic performance. Additional questions pertaining to whether or not ethical and moral activities have a positive impact on the academic performance of students need further investigation. Thus, the researcher would suggest that consideration be given to further study being made in the following areas:

1. This study should be replicated, using a different population, particularly Buddhist or non-Christian students who enrolled in a Christian school in other regions to investigate if ethical and moral activities or religious-related activities regulated by a Christian-

based school have any impact on their academic performance or college life.

2. The data sources used for analyzing correlation between academic achievement and involvement in ethical and moral activities in this current study are quantitative in nature. Therefore, a qualitative study should be conducted to enrich cross-validation of data for in-depth discussion of the findings.
3. A study on the effects of involvement in the university's ethical and moral activities on students' future profession should be researched or followed up to investigate whether or not these extracurricular activities have an impact on students' profession or daily life following graduation.

VII. Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the correlation between students' academic achievement and their involvement in ethical and moral activities as well as to examine if there is any significant difference between students with higher academic achievement and the ones with lower academic achievement with regard to their involvement in ethical and moral activities. The study results showed that involvement in ethical and moral activities had a positive correlation with students' academic achievement. The findings also revealed that there was statistically significant difference between students with high GPA and their peers with lower GPA. Involvement in ethical and moral activities rather boosted students' learning outcomes than hindering them. Extracurricular activities such as ethical and moral activities as well as religious-related activities are factors helping to bring forth intellectual development of individuals to pursue a higher scale of inner potential. Such activities not only serve in academic area, but also help in excellence of character development. To sum up, the current study results should be valuable to the Student Administration Office as well as Chaplaincy Office at Asia-Pacific

International University who have invested a large amount of time to regulate these meaningful activities in order to foster students to grow mentally, socially, and spiritually as defined by the Adventist education philosophy.

REFERENCES

- Academic Bulletin. (2014). *Asia-Pacific International University Academic Bulletin 2013-2015*. Bangkok: Darnsutha Press Co., Ltd.
- Adeyemo, S. A. (2010). The relationship between students' participation in school extracurricular activities and their achievement in physics. *International Journal of Science and Technology Education Research*, 1(6), 111- 117.
- Broh, B. A. (2002). Linking extracurricular programming to academic achievement: who benefits and why? *Sociology of Education*. 75, 69-96.
- Chip, F., Cynthia, H., & Jane, J. (2003). *Improving student achievement through character education*. Master of Arts Action Research Project, Saint Xavier University and SkyLight Professional Development Field-Based Master's Program. Retrieved March 22, 2015, from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED477142.pdf>
- Erickson, L.D. & Phillips, J. W. (2012). The effect of religious-based mentoring on educational attainment: more than just a spiritual high? *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 51(3): 568-587.
- Fujita, K. (2005). *The effects of extracurricular activities on the academic performance of junior high students*. Retrieved May 15, 2015, from <http://www.kon.org/urc/v5/fujita.htm>

- Gert, B. (2012). The definition of morality. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved March 3, 2015, from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/morality-definition/>
- Guseinov, A.A. (2014). The golden rule of morality. *Russian Social Science Review*, 55(6), 84-100.
- Huang, Y.& Chang, S. (2004). Academic and co-curricular involvement: Their relationship and the best combinations for student growth. *Journal of College Student Development*, 45, 391-406.
- Jeynes, W. H. (2003). *Religion, education, and academic success*. Greenwich: information age.
- Jeynes, W. H. (2007). Religion, intact families, and the achievement gap. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion*, 3, 1-24.
- Kitjaroonchai, N. & Kitjaroonchai, T. (2012). Motivation toward English language learning of Thai students majoring in English at Asia-Pacific International University. *Catalyst*, 7(1), 21-40.
- Luco, A. (2014). The definition of morality: threading the needle. *Social Theory and Practice*, 40(3), 361-387.
- Malti, T., Keller, M., & Buchmann, M. (2012). Do moral choices make us feel good?: the development of adolescent's emotions following moral decision making. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 23(2), 389-397.
- Marsh, H.W.,&Kleitman, S. (2002). Extracurricular activities: the good, the bad, and the nonlinear. *Harvard Educational Review*, 72, 464-512.
- Metsapelto, R.L.,& Pulkkinen, L. (2012). Socioemotional behavior and school achievement in relation to extracurricular activity participation in middle childhood. *Scandinavian Journal of Education Research*, 56(2), 167-182.
- Mooney, M. (2010). Religion, college grades, and satisfaction among students at elite colleges and universities. *Sociology of Religion*, 71(2), 197-215.
- Morality. (1995). In *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary*(5th edition). UK: Oxford University Press.
- Morality. (2015). In *Online business dictionary.com*. Retrieved March 3, 2015,from <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/morality.html>
- National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Thailand*. (2006). Bangkok.
- Nedley, N. (2010). *Adventist youth conference: How to enhance your intelligence*. [3ABN]. Australia. Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (2014). *Indicators and external quality assessment criteria, the fourth round (2014-2020)*. Bangkok.
- Pornrungrroj, C. (2014). *The quality of students is a reflection of teacher quality*. Bangkok: The office for national education standards and quality assessment.
- Proverbs 9:10 – New International Version. Retrieved May 10, 2015, from <http://biblehub.com/niv/proverbs>

/9-10.htm

- Puntachai, S. & Khamawattana, P. (2012). A study on the desirable characteristics of bachelor's of engineering graduates from the viewpoint of employers. *Online Journal of Education*, 7(1), 518- 528. Retrieved March 4, 2015, from <http://www.edu.chula.ac.th/ojed/doc/V71/v71d0038.pdf>
- Sellmann, J.D. (2009). Buddhist morality and trans-morality. *The International Journal of the Asian Philosophical Association*. 1(2), 62-72
- Stiff-Williams, H. R. (2010). Widening the lens to teach character education alongside standard curriculum. *The Clearing House*, 83: 115–120.
- Strapp, C.M.,& Farr, R. J. (2010). To get involved or not: the relation among extracurricular involvement, satisfaction, and academic achievement. *Teaching of Psychology*,37, 50-54.
- Sumari, M., Hussin, Z., Siraj, S. (2010). Factors contributing to academic achievement and moral development: A qualitative study. *The International Journal of Research and Review*, 5(2), 18-23.
- Wang J. & Shively J. (2008). The impact of extracurricular activity on student academic performance. Retrieved April 28, 2015, from <http://www.csus.edu/oir/Research%20Projects/Student%20Activity%20Report%202009.pdf>
- White, E.G. (1903). *Education*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association.